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RETAIL INFLATION COOLS

India's retail inflation fell to 6.83% in August from 7.44% in July

Fall is because of softening prices of vegetables	Overall veg inflation is down 26.14% in August
But drop is still outside RBI's comfort zone	Food basket inflation stood at 9.94%
RBI's inflation tolerance band is between 2-6%	Prices of oil and fats declined to 15.28%

Factory output zooms to five month high of 5.7 per cent in July

Factory output growth measured in terms of industrial production stood at 3.8% in June this year | PTI

RBI HAS PROJECTED CPI INFLATION AT 5.4% FOR 2023-24, WITH AN ESTIMATE FOR 6.2% FOR Q2, 5.7% FOR Q3 & 5.2% IN Q4

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251 farmers end lives in state since this April

CM orders officials to monitor moneylenders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A whopping 251 farmers have died by suicide in Karnataka since April, mainly due to harassment by moneylenders and banks. What had forced them to take the extreme step was they were unable to repay their loans due to crop loss because of poor monsoon.

While taking serious note of the crisis faced by farmers across the state at a review meeting here on Tuesday, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah directed the deputy commissioners and CEOs of zilla panchayats to act against the moneylenders who troubled farmers. He also directed them to pay compensation to the families of dead farmers once the government releases a list of drought-hit taluks. The list is expected to be released soon.

Siddaramaiah pointed out that only 174 cases had been resolved and ordered the officials to take steps to distribute compensation to the rest of the families of farmers who died by suicide, at the earliest.

While Siddaramaiah only mentioned the number of suicide cases this year, it was the Chief Minister's Office which confirmed 251 such cases since April. This is the first time that an official figure is coming out on farmer suicides after the Congress came to power in May.

According to a study conducted by the University of Mysore, in 2019, about 11,000 farmers died by suicide since 1998. While nature's vagaries played havoc with crops, the farmers fell prey to high interest rates heaped upon them by moneylenders, forcing them into a debt trap, from which they see no way out.

The CM, stressing on avoiding delay in works, said applications coming to offices of tahsildars, subdivisional officers and deputy commissioners have been pending for more than five years in many offices. "If the case is not settled even after these many years, it means officials are not working properly," he said, pointing out that justice delayed is justice denied, and longer the delay, more scope for corruption. "Delay is also corruption," he added.

He said tahsildars should dispose of applications within three months, whereas settlement of appeals coming to the sub-divisional officers should be resolved within six months. DCs should resolve cases within one year. P7

Sedition law challenge goes to 5-judge bench

SHRUTI KANNAR @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday referred a batch of pleas challenging the validity of the sedition law under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) to a five-judge bench to decide if its 1962 decision of upholding the constitutionality of Section 124A in the Kedar Nath Singh case requires reconsideration.

Turning down the Centre's request to await Parliament's decision on the proposed Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill, 2023, (BNSB) which is to replace the IPC, a three-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud observed that the new law would have "prospective application" and govern the cases filed after it is brought into effect.

While the BNSB dropped Section 124A, it introduced Section 150 that deals with sedition though it does not use the word as such. It describes the offence as any act that endangers the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

Since the Kedar Nath verdict came from a five-judge bench, a three-judge bench can't reverse it, the CJI reasoned. In any case, the Centre is not planning to delete the provision but having it in a new form, he added.

"There is no way we can avoid judging the constitutionality of the Section 124A," he said.

Attorney General R Venkataramani told the bench that substantive hearing on the pleas would be untimely as the bill was pending for consideration before the Parliamentary Standing Committee. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said, "There is a new section in BBSB. Can it not wait (for Parliament vetting)? The earlier government had opportunity to say it was a draconian law but they missed it."

Seeking reference of the pleas to a five-judge bench, the petitioners, appearing through senior advocate Kapil Sibal, said the enactment of the new law would not obviate the need to adjudicate upon the constitutionality of the existing law.

HIGH ALERT

Kerala reports four cases of Nipah, 2 dead

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kozhikode / New Delhi

THE rare Nipah virus has claimed two lives and infected two others in Kerala's Kozhikode district, the state government said on Tuesday.

Kerala health minister Veena George said three out of five samples sent to Pune-based National Institute of Virology have come out positive, while two are negative. The samples include that of a 40-year-old person who died on Monday. The sample of another person who died on August 30 was not collected, but the government is treating it as a Nipah case.

"Samples of the 47-year-old patient who died on August 30 could not be sent for examination. But we assume it was the index case from where the outbreak began," the minister said, adding that viral load is usually high in index cases.

Earlier in the day, Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya confirmed that the two 'unnatural' deaths reported from Kozhikode recently were caused by the Nipah virus. He said a central team of experts has been rushed to Kerala to assist the state government in managing the situation.

Among those infected are the nine-year-old child of the man who died on August 30 and his brother-in-law. The four-year-old child of the victim and 10-month-old kid of his brother-in-law tested negative. P7,11

EXPRESS READ

India beat SL by 41 runs, enter Asia Cup final

Colombo: Indian bowlers produced a splendid effort to carry their team into the Asia Cup final with a 41-run win over Sri Lanka on Tuesday. India scored just 213 after Lankan spinners Dunith Wellalage (5/40) and Charith Asalanka (4/18) bamboozled them. But India, guided by Kuldeep Yadav (4/43), bowled out Sri Lanka for 172 | P17

ED lens on sand mafia, search at 30 places in TN

Chennai: The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday carried out searches in 30 places across Tamil Nadu over allegations of money laundering and tax evasion in mining and sale of sand. Officials also entered the water resources department chief engineer's office in Chennai under CRP force protection and took away files pertaining to sand mining | P7

Sudhakar booked under atrocities Act

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

MINISTER for Planning and Statistics **D Sudhakar** is in the dock with Yelahanka police registering an FIR against him following a complaint by a woman alleging assault and atrocity by him over a land dispute.

While three FIRs based on complaints and counter-complaints have been registered, the minister denied the allegations against him.

The dispute is related to a piece of land bearing survey No 108/1 at Gandhinagar, KHB Colony, Yelahanka.

In her complaint filed on Sunday, Subbamma alleged that Seven Hills Developers and Traders, of which Sudhakar is a director, had fraudulently got a sale deed from her family for the said land. Civil cases are still pending before the city civil court and the high court in this connection. She alleged that on Saturday, Sudhakar, Srinivas G, Bhagyamma and 40 others trespassed into the land and demolished the compound wall and sheds there.

After learning this, Subbamma and others rushed to the spot and objected to the demolition of the compound wall and the sheds there. But the trespassers allegedly assaulted her daughter Asha, besides passing casteist slurs against them.

Based on the complaint, the police booked Sudhakar, Srinivas, Bhagyamma and others under various Sections of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and the IPC.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Sudhakar defended himself stating that the land belonged to Seven Hills Developers and Traders. He claimed that the land was purchased long ago legally and he had not seen the complainant or her family members for the past six months. CONTINUED ON: P6

OPPN LEADERS SEEK MINISTER'S ARREST

Bengaluru: In the wake of an FIR being registered against Planning and Statistics Minister D Sudhakar, the Opposition BJP and JDS has demanded that he be dropped from the Cabinet and arrested. While senior BJP leader DV Sadananda Gowda said Sudhakar should be immediately arrested JDS leader HD Kumaraswamy if the CM has any respect for Dalits and his post, he should not keep the minister in his cabinet. He should be sacked immediately. P6

Man kills wife, attacks in-laws, injures SP

V VELAYUDHAM @ Kolar

KOLAR Superintendent of Police M Narayan, his gunman and another policeman were injured while trying to arrest a man who killed his wife, attacked his father-in-law, sister-in-law and brother-in-law at Nambi Halli, five km from Srinivasapura, on Tuesday afternoon.

Central Range Inspector-General of Police BR Ravikanthe Gowda said that a dispute between Nagesh (50), a mutton stall owner, and his wife Radha is the reason for the attack. A case between them is pending in court.

On Tuesday afternoon, Nagesh went to Radha's house and assaulted her with a sharp weapon, killing her on the spot. He then attacked his father-in-law Muniyappa, who is battling for his life at hospital.

Nagesh also attacked Radha's sister and her husband. Enraged by this brutal attack, people of the village rushed to spot and tried to assault Nagesh.

Seeing the crowd, Nagesh entered a house and locked himself inside. When some in the crowd attempted to attack Nagesh, policemen resorted to a mild lathicharge.

Meanwhile, Narayan rushed to the spot and warned Nagesh to surrender. But Nagesh threatened to blow himself up by setting ablaze a gas cylinder inside the house. When Nagesh was not willing to surrender, people attempted to enter the house again. But policemen thwarted their attempt.

Soon, policemen lobbed tear gas shells through a window and broke open the door to nab Nagesh. When Narayan, his gunman and some policemen entered the house, Nagesh attacked them. Immediately, policemen opened three rounds of fire at Nagesh. He was shifted to hospital with bullet injuries. Narayan and other policemen are being treated in a hospital. Their condition is stable, Ravikanthe Gowda said.

SELFIE TIME

Flyers at Terminal 2 of KIA which started international operations on Tuesday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL | P2

HC to govt: Try flextime for schools to ease traffic snarls

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Tuesday suggested to the state government to explore the possibilities of easing traffic in the city by asking the education secretary to call a meeting of representatives of private and government schools, school bus operators, and parents' associations to discuss revision of school timings.

Similarly, the court asked the secretary of industries and labour to call meetings of representatives of associations of industries, factories, industrial organisations, and chamber of commerce to discuss revision of working hours of their employees to ease traffic in the city.

The stakeholders may also provide suggestions regarding flexible hours of working or other ways to ease traffic, the court said.

A division bench of Chief Justice Prasanna B Varale and Justice Krishna S Dixit passed the order after hearing a public interest litigation filed by Samarpana Cultural and Social Organisation regarding widening of Ballari Road from BDA Junction to Mekhri Circle.

"We appreciate that the state government permitted the participation of experts in the field... We permit the government to proceed further and to take appropriate steps already initiated to ease traffic and also consider the suggestions of petitioners and directions issued by the court," they observed.

INFRA BOOST

90 PROJECTS TO COME UP ALONG CHINA BORDERS

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates projects of Border Roads Organisation worth over Rs 2,900 crore spread across 11 states and Union Territories, at an event in Jammu | PTI

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